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Canada

SPEAKING NOTES FOR ANNE MCLELLAN ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF FUNDING UNDER THE *NATIONAL STRATEGY ON COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION*

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HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

As delivered

Thank you, Cecil, for that kind introduction. My thanks also to my fellow speakers and to all of you for joining us here today. It is a pleasure to be back in Halifax.

There is a spirit of community here in Nova Scotia that recognizes the strength of collective action, the merit of common sense, and the value of hard work. From Yarmouth to Sydney, Nova Scotia is a place that puts a premium on helping those in need.

In many ways, these are the characteristics that define the *National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention*. They are the foundation of an approach, launched by the Government of Canada nearly three years ago, that deals in a thoughtful and determined way with the problems of crime and victimization.

Traditional methods of addressing crime, such as police and incarceration, are vital. Without question, we must get tough with those who break our laws, and our fight against organized crime is a testament to that fact.

But to truly prevent crime we must address the root causes of it; things such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and poverty. They are things to which no community in Canada is immune, and they are factors that can place individuals, and young people in particular, at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

Working in partnership with Canadians, communities, and the provincial and territorial governments, we are coming to grips with these factors. Yet, the challenge is great.

Crime carries a heavy burden. In total, the federal and provincial governments spend nearly $10 billion each year on the police, courts, and corrections. While a dollar figure cannot readily be placed on the personal costs of crime, we know that victims and their families pay heavily in too many ways. More broadly, crime, and the fear of crime, robs us of our freedom and diminishes our quality of life.

There are no simple answers to the problem of crime, and no one-size-fits-all solution. There are instead many possible answers.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government of Canada, I am pleased to announce the contribution of over $ 1 million dollars to support 39 new crime prevention projects in Nova Scotia under the *National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention*.

In addition, I would like to announce that under the Victims Fund, we are providing over $179,000 to support three Nova Scotia initiatives. Through this fund, we are working towards improving the experience of victims of crime in the criminal justice system. Too often, victims have said that they were left standing outside looking in at the justice system, when in fact they have an important

role to play. In order to increase victims' participation, they need to be given a voice that is listened to and respected.

Through the Victims Fund we are supporting victim programs and services, public education initiatives, conferences and research by experts and victim advocates that will help to strengthen that voice. In doing so, we are also ensuring that the justice system is accessible and fair, reflecting the values of all Canadians.

The *National Strategy* and the Victims Fund are important components of our public safety agenda. To be sure, the needs of victims further emphasize the importance of the National Strategy as it seeks to prevent crime and, ultimately, protect those vulnerable to it.

By targeting the factors that underpin crime and victimization before they take shape, and by working with local communities at the grass-roots level, the *National Strategy* helps develop effective solutions to specific crime problems.

As different as these 39 projects may be, they are built upon strong partnerships, such as the one being forged between the Government of Canada and the Government of Nova Scotia. It is when we all unite as partners, and intervene early, that we effect the most profound changes in our communities.

While time does not allow me to describe each of these projects, I do want to touch on a couple by way of example.

Consider **Project Turnaround** from the Halifax Regional Youth Advisory Board. This initiative will work with at-risk youth, those who have had trouble at home, trouble at school and, in some cases, brushes with the justice system.

Using a range of activities, both recreational and educational, Project Turnaround will strive to make a positive difference in the lives of these young people. It will break the cycles of aggression and violence. It will, in addition, break down the barriers between these young people and the police, bringing them together in a positive and productive setting.

Everywhere the *National Strategy* is at work, young people figure prominently. They are served and supported by projects and they author projects. Whatever the case, the voice of young people has left an indelible mark on this collective effort.

The East Preston Recreation Centre has a project called **Mind-Set**. In a community that has been beset by a number of youth crime problems, **Mind-Set** offers an important and intelligent response. All too often, young people are left to feel disconnected from society. In response, we must be prepared to foster a sense of community ownership among young people. This initiative puts young people at the centre, as mentors, peer mediators and as decision-makers in the development of recreational programs.

These are just two examples of the projects being announced today. Ronald Colman and Marcus James will speak to you shortly about their respective initiatives.

Since the launch of the *National Strategy*, over 1,400 community safety and crime prevention projects have been funded throughout Canada. In Nova Scotia alone, the projects number 103.

In real terms, the *National Strategy* is not about projects; it is about people. The *National Strategy* is supporting Canadians -- Canadians who want to make their communities safer places in which to live, work, and play. The *National Strategy* is helping to provide people with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to undertake community-based solutions to crime.

Thank you again for celebrating this day with us, and best wishes to all of the supported groups.

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